

E 458

.2

.V94

Copy 1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

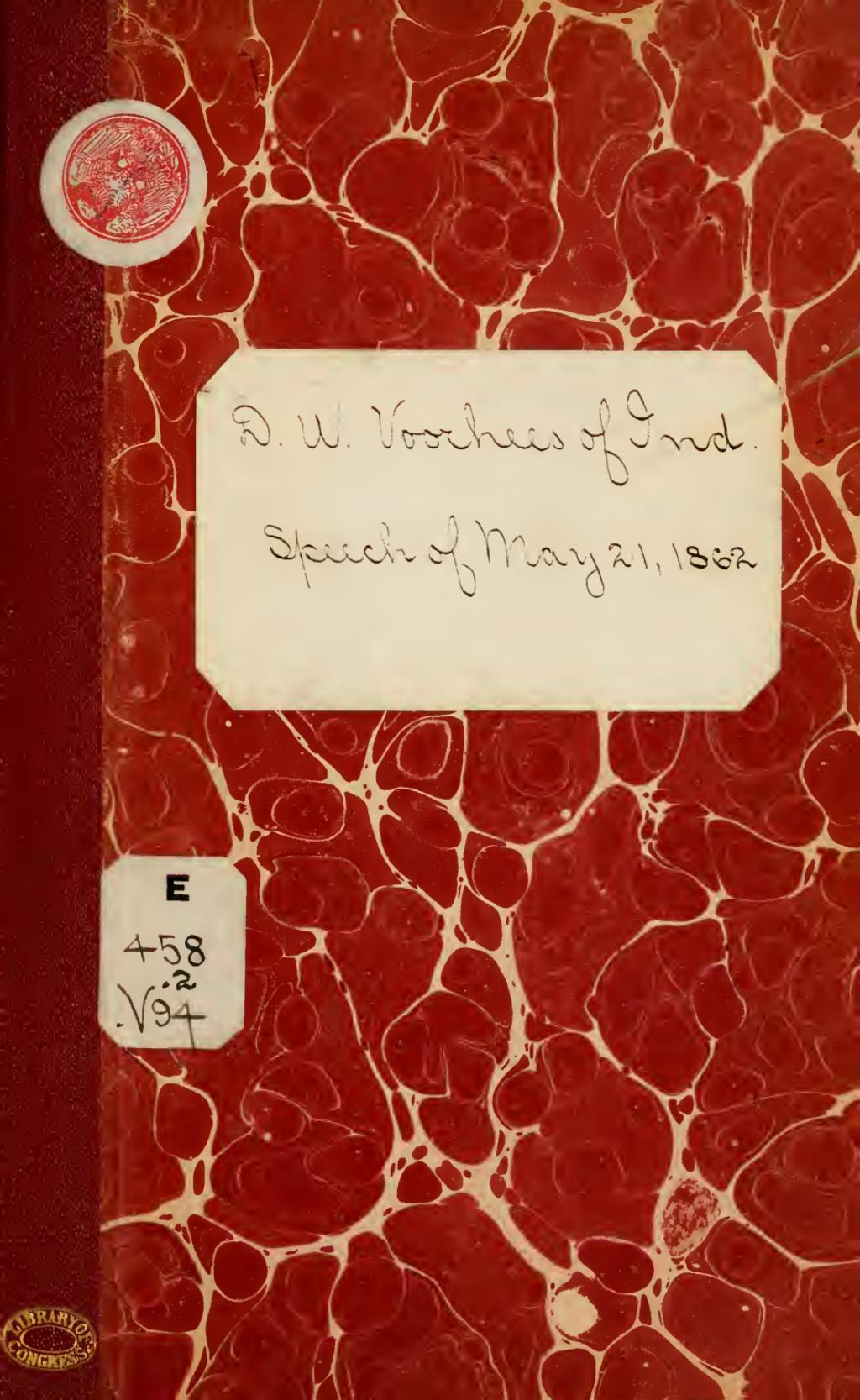


0 012 028 300 5



Conservation Resources

Lig-Free® Type I



D. W. Voorhees of Ind.

Speech of May 21, 1862

E

458

.2
V94



Glass E 458.2

Book V 94

E 459
V 97

S P E E C H
O F
HON. D. W. VOORHEES,
O F I N D I A N A .

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 21, 1862.

The House having under consideration the bills Nos. 171 and 172, Mr. VOORHEES said :

Mr. SPEAKER, The financial policy of a Government has always been considered by men of reflections as second only in importance to national honor and national existence. Indeed, no nation can long maintain an honorable existence which makes an unwise or a dishonest use of the resources of its people. It is a fundamental principle of constitutional liberty that the citizen shall own and enjoy the wealth which the labor of his hands extorts from the bosom of the earth, subject only to that portion which he may justly be called upon to pay for the protection of government and the blessings of social order. He has this dominion over the fruits of his toil by divine right, and when this right is invaded by the Government, through impolicy or fraud, and the citizen is robbed under the forms of law, it becomes his highest duty to repel the invasion and resist the wrong. In a free Government this is done through the peaceful instrumentality of the ballot-box, and a change in the agents of the people who are responsible for the unnecessary oppression. In despotisms, where the popular voice has no weight and cannot be heard, the toiling millions, when they can endure no more, enforce justice with the sword. But the right to a man's own, under all circumstances, is an inherent right, and human nature has held it sacred in all ages, and enforced it in every form in which the human will can assert itself.

I have been led to these observations by what I humbly conceive to be the unsound, false, and ruinous system of finance which has been imposed upon the people of this country within the last twelve months, and though I have not the claims of age or extended experience, yet I beg to be candidly heard by the House and the country while I submit my views in that regard. The wants the wishes, the hopes, the fears, the feelings, and the thoughts of the laboring classes are all familiar to me. I was born one of them, reared in their midst, and partook of their toil. I represent such a people on this floor, and I feel my heart swell with pride when I call to my mind the honest, the loyal, the intelligent, and the industrious constituency whose interests and whose equality before the law in the distribution of the burdens of this Government shall be my theme to-day. And with solemn reverence I here say that as I shall prove faithful to them to the utmost of my ability, and thus promote the true cause of American prosperity and glory, so may God, in His mercy, deal with me and mine.

Sir, during the past year we have been engaged in a most stupendous war. It assumed, from the first, proportions of the most horrible magnitude. Any eye could see at the opening stages of this conflict that the struggle of this Government to maintain its just authority within its lawful jurisdiction was to be one of the most terrible and, perhaps, protracted that ever shook the world. Courage, chivalry, patriotism, devotion to the Union and the laws, all came forward and still stand ready in an inexhaustible quantity. The country has glowed from end to end and throughout all its vast extent with a fervid love for the Government as our fathers made it. But, sordid and practical as it

6379
'05E 458
~~VX~~

2

E 458
.2
.V 94

may seem to some, one of the main sinews of war is money, plain money. Without it armies do not move and navies do not float, and the purse of the nation is to be found in the pockets of the people. Sir, in view of these facts, what has been the course of those in authority since the war commenced, in regard to the great question of national economy? Have our resources been carefully husbanded? Have our public moneys been strictly guarded from the hand of the plunderer? Have our public officers been held to a rigid accountability in their use of the hard earned revenues of the country? Has financial integrity marked the conduct of those in whom the people placed their trust when the present Administration came into power? Has common honesty been observed by those who won their way to popular confidence by their fierce denunciations of the alleged corruptions of former Administrations? I speak not as a partisan nor in the spirit of party. I trust I can rise above all such considerations; but these are questions in which the people of all parties have a deep and overwhelming interest, and they are questions, too, which all men in every part of the country who desire an honest administration of our public affairs are now asking with serious and startling emphasis. The answer which must come, and of which impartial history will make an everlasting record, is one which bows the head and burns the cheek of every lover of his country's good name with humiliation and with shame.

Let us look calmly and carefully at a few figures, not of alluring and captivating fancy, but figures of cold and repulsive reality. The veil which a pleasing and hopeful sophistry weaves around its object with which to beguile the people into a slumbering sense of security must be torn away. Nothing should be hid from the honest eye of popular scrutiny. It is the duty of the Representative to fully portray those facts of vital importance on which the governing power of this free country, the people, will soon be called upon to act.

I presume, sir, that at this time no one can, with entire accuracy, estimate the amount of our public debt. It is one of the alarming signs of the times that either from confusion and incapacity, or from the shrinking dread of recognizing an appalling truth, we have an unusual silence in official quarters in regard to the extent of Government liabilities. We are, however, relieved in a great measure upon that point, by the statements which have been made from time upon this floor, and especially by the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, [Mr. STEVENS,] who has a right to speak on that subject as one in authority. From that source we learn that our expenditures have, for many months past, exceeded the enormous sum of \$3,000,000 per day. One year's expense at this rate reaches the sum of \$1,095,000,000. That our indebtedness at this moment is equal to that vast amount will hardly be denied by any intelligent and candid person who has had the opportunity to observe the profusion and recklessness with which the resources and the credit of the Government have been used since this most unnatural strife fell like a blight upon the land. A little more than one year ago we beheld the inflamed and wrathful visage of civil war for the first time disturb, like a baleful comet, the peace of this Republic. Since then battles have been fought, equal in numbers engaged, in heroism of conduct, and in the ghastly heaps of the slain, to the renowned conflicts of an ancient story. Victory, too, under an overruling Providence, has chosen the standard of the Government, and our armies are steadily penetrating that immense scope of country in which the banner of revolt has been reared.

But assuming that the smiles of fortune will continue to rest upon our arms, and that no reverses are in store for our troops, yet nothing is plainer to the thinking mind which resolves the future by considering the past than the fact that the expenses of this Government for the ensuing year will fully equal, and most likely surpass, what we have witnessed in the year that has just closed. As our armies push forward their columns into the distant parts of a desolated and impoverished and hostile country, the difficulty and cost of their support will rapidly multiply. The value of transportation will almost double the price of the stores transported. There has been much undigested and crude declamation on this floor in regard to subsisting our forces on the products of the country we invade. This, however, is simply one of those un-

6379

.05

substantial theories which, unhappily for the country, have so plentifully abounded in this body since our national calamities came upon us. All the great authors on the art of war show its absurdity, and our own experience has already exploded it. It has already been found that where one army has swept over a country, but a barren reception awaits another; and especially is this the case when a retreating army is impelled by the strongest military reasons to leave nothing for the subsistence of its victorious pursuer. Destruction then marks every field, and war, with its iron-mailed hand, scourges the bosom of nature herself into sterility. Attila, the fierce barbarian conqueror, at the head of his ravaging hordes, announced to affrighted Europe that grass would never grow again where the hoofs of his war horse had left their mark. Scarcely less blighted will be the track of defeated and retreating southern armies, when no longer able to meet us in general engagements. But little will be left after their own wants are met, and that little will be destroyed. Our supply trains will have to move with our armies from the loyal States, thus augmenting the public expenditures at every step. It is safe, then, to conclude that the year that is to come, and on which we are just entering—the second year of the war—will swell the indebtedness of this Government to the alarming sum of \$2,000,000,000. This amount will have accrued about the time the toiling citizen is fairly called upon to commence the weary task of meeting its awful proportions by taxation. It is a task, sir, that no eye which now beholds the sun will ever see completed. The child is not born, and will not be for more than a hundred years, who will escape the visits of the Federal tax-gatherer in the incessant labors of future generations to wear away by the steady droppings of a perpetual tax this mountain of debt. This is no high-wrought or extravagant statement, but the sad and melancholy truth, as each succeeding year of the approaching future will but too truly bear witness.

It is said, however, here and elsewhere throughout the country, that we are a nation of inexhaustible resources, almost fabulous wealth, and that burdens which would cause other Governments to reel and stagger are as light as feathers to us. This is a pleasing tribute to our national vanity; it sounds well in our self-complacent ears. We have been so long exalted in happiness over all other people, so long blessed in every enjoyment above what God has ever vouchsafed to any other nation, that we are even now unwilling or unable to realize the fact that the hand of affliction has at last fallen upon us with a force almost as cruel as that which visited Jerusalem when Titus was encamped before her walls. It is true, however, that we abound in wealth. It is true that our lap has been filled with treasure; but things in this world exist principally by comparison. That which constituted immense wealth a little more than a year ago, in view of a public debt of less than fifty millions, diminishes rapidly when brought to bear on a debt of forty times that amount.

By the census report of 1860 we find that the assessed value of all the real and personal property of the entire United States, both loyal and rebellious, is \$12,006,756,585. Thus it will be seen that our public debt is now equal to one-twelfth of all the taxable property of the Government, and that in one year from now it will be equal to one-sixth of everything the people possess. No cunning and studied speeches made to mislead and deceive can hide the naked fact that this is the people's debt, and they will have it to pay. Every sixth acre of land, every sixth ox, every sixth horse, every sixth sheep, every sixth hog, and every sixth dollar, under the financial mismanagement and fraud of the party now in power, will, in one year from to-day, be covered and swallowed up by the amount of the Government debt. It will be equal to an interest on every taxable substance in the land of sixteen and two-thirds per cent. Every business man knows that in the private transactions of life such a rate of interest is the speedy prelude to individual ruin in him who pays it; and the nation on which such a weight is imposed is on the brink of overwhelming bankruptcy. In this estimate it will be seen that I have taken the figures of the census report as they were made when the unruffled calm of peace and prosperity gave to property its highest value. To what extent the ravages of war have depreciated this value it is impossible to calculate; but that the property of the people of the United States is to-day worth more than two-thirds of what it was one year ago, will not be pretended; and to

the extent of that depreciation is the proportion which the public debt bears to it increased.

But again. By the census report from which I have just quoted we find that the population of the United States in the year 1860 was a little more than thirty millions. Of this population about five millions are voters. A moment's calculation in the simplest rules of arithmetic shows that each individual voter of these five millions is in debt to-day \$200 on account of his proportion of the national expenses, and that one year hence he will be in debt \$400 on the same account. The liability of my own great State of Indiana, according to the rule of taxation which has been enacted against her by the present Congress, will be \$100,000,000, of which enormous sum the people of the district which I have the honor to represent will stand charged with something over twelve millions of dollars.

Where, sir, in all the dreary history of profligate nations were ever such burdens as these imposed on the shoulers of any people in so short a time? The mourning children of Israel, captives in the brick-yards of Egypt, were scarcely more slaves to their Egyptian masters than the American people will be to the constant demands and exactions of the national debt. It will come upon them like the lean and hungry kine rising from the river of Pharoah's dream to devour the well-favored and fat-fleshed cattle of all the land. Tell me not of the blessings of a public debt. That cry is simply the cheat and the falsehood by which men who have abused their authority seek to cover up the outrages which they have inflicted on confiding people. It is as old, too, as crime in high places, or the principle of base cupidity in the heart of man. The Pharisees of Jerusalem over their hoarded gains, the kings of Babylon on their couches of gold, Alexander at his gorgeous banquets, the Sultan in the midst of his soft dalliances of expensive love, corrupt, effeminate Roman senators in their villas of marble magnificence, the Bourbons of France surrounded by the splendors of the Tuilleries, the Stuarts of England, clinging to their maxims of kingcraft, lustful tyrants, debauched princes, and dishonest statesmen of all ages and every clime have all talked wisely and profoundly of the sweets and comforts which flow to the people from that fountain of bitter waters—*a great public debt*. If they can convince the people that this monstrous heresy is right, then all check and restraint on extravagance and wasteful indulgence at once are withdrawn, and avarice and corruption are left free to prey with unbridled license on the substance of the nation. It is alarming, sir, that this fatal doctrine is found creeping into the debates of the American Congress. Has it come to this? Has this great nation, so famed for its wealth and pecuniary responsibility, been driven so soon to seek refuge in the mischievous principle that it is a national benefit to be sunk in indebtedness? It becomes the people, before it is too late, to arouse themselves against this baleful dogma of despotism, and prove to the world that they are worthy of the freedom which they as yet possess. Let them seek wisdom and warning on this vital subject in the teachings of that great founder of American democracy, Thomas Jefferson. Discussing this question in 1813, he said :

"At the time we were funding our national debt, we heard much about 'public debt being a public blessing,' that the stock representing it was a creation of active capital for the aliment of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture. This paradox was well adapted to the minds of believers in dreams, and the gulfs of that size entered *bona fide* into it."

"We are warranted, then, in affirming that this parody on the principle of the public debt, being a public blessing and its mutation into the blessing of private instead of public debts, is as ridiculous as the original principle itself."

And again, in a letter to Albert Gallatin, this profound statesman and political philosopher says :

"But if the debt should once more be swelled to a formidable size, its entire discharge will be despised of, and we shall be committed to the English career of debt, corruption, rotteness, closing with revolution. The discharge of the debt, therefore, is vital to the destinies of our Government, and it hangs on Mr. Madison and yourself alone."

But, sir, I am well aware that I will be met here by the familiar cry that these terrible expenditures are necessary to maintain the existence of the Government and to carry on the war in which we are engaged. To this assertion I return a plain and explicit denial. From whatever quarter it comes, whether

from high places or low places, it is not true. The public debt up to this hour, and to the extent of its fearful proportions, has not been the work of a national necessity, nor the creation of honest hands. The Mexican war, though a foreign and distant one, in which we paid the soldier substantially the same that we pay him now, cost this Government, under the wise and honest administration of James K. Polk, in proportion to the numbers engaged—man for man—but little more than one-fourth the amount now being expended on a war waged at our very door steps. Of course, I do not deny that heavy expenses have been properly incurred; but that fraud and crime in their darkest hues have swollen to an overwhelming amount the pecuniary liabilities of the people, I stand ready to prove. I shall ask no man to decide without the evidence to sustain so serious a charge. I make it, sir, with no pleasure. I delight not in such things. I love to speak kindly of my fellow-man. I would rather praise than censure. Before my great Judge I can say that there is nothing in my heart which desires to drag down or wound any human being in the wide world. I would rather lift men up, if in my power, than abase them. I love, too, their approbation. But when these wishes and desires of my heart stand in the way of my public duty, they must all be suppressed. The duty, however ungracious and unpleasant, must be performed; and in the case now under consideration it seems, to my mind, that righteous justice demands the task before me. The authors of a grinding extortion from the weary hands of honest labor are enemies to the human race, and should be so treated.

Sir, as early as last July, when this Congress first met in extraordinary session, the taint of corruption was perceived in the atmosphere of the capital, and a committee, since so celebrated, was raised to investigate and to expose. The result of a portion of the labors of that committee is before the country in the shape of a volume of over eleven hundred pages. The majority of that committee are friends to the party now in power, and the evidence which they have furnished is entitled to full credit. Would that a volume of it could be placed in the hands of every tax-paying voter of the country! Its dark labyrinths of proven guilt ought to be explored by every intelligent mind. By the solemn testimony of this committee no branch of business connected with the military and naval affairs of this Government seems to have escaped the hungry grasp of unlawful avarice and peculation. From the smallest article of food which enters into the soldier's ration, to the purchase of cattle for an entire army; from the blanket on which the tired soldier sleeps at night to the vast fortifications for the defence of a city; from the pistol at the soldier's belt to the cannon at whose breech he stands in the day of battle: from the meanest transport sloop to the mightiest man-of-war afloat, everywhere and on everything we find the impress of favoritism and of fraud. The report of this committee is before me, and I submit a few extracts in proof of my statement.—Speaking of contracts for cattle made by the War Department during its management by Mr. Cameron, the committee say:

"We have here not only evidence of gross mismanagement, a total disregard of the interests of the Government, and a total recklessness in the expenditure of the funds of the Government, but there is every reason to believe that there was collusion upon the part of the employes of the Government to assist in robbing the Treasury, for, when a conscientious officer refused to pass cattle not in accordance with the contract, he was in effect superseded by one who had no conscientious scruples in the matter, and cattle that were rejected by his predecessor were at once accepted."

"With such a state of things existing, if officers of the Government who should be imbued with patriotism and integrity enough to have a care of the means of the Treasury are ready to assist speculating contractors to extort upon and defraud the Government, where is this system of peculation to end, and how soon may not the finances of the Government be reduced to a woeful bankruptcy?"

Again, on the same subject:

"In this matter there is much evidence of gross mismanagement and culpable carelessness in making contracts, together with a reckless improvidence of the means of the Government. Evidence exists of large contracts for cattle having been made without any advertisement for bids, or any effort being made by the agents of the Government to satisfy themselves whether the prices to be paid were exorbitant, or even extortionate."

Speaking of the employment of Alexander Cummings by Mr. Cameron, then

Secretary of War, to fill an important contract by which the Government has lost large sums of money, the committee say:

"Mr. Cummings had no general acquaintance with business in New York. He had been a newspaper editor in Pennsylvania for twelve years, and had been in New York as the publisher of another paper for some eighteen months. He was the intimate personal and political friend of the Secretary of War, and acquainted with the internal arrangements and connections of the railroads of Pennsylvania, over which supplies are to be shipped, and he is invested with the control of \$2,000,000 to purchase equipments for our army, and charter vessels for transporting troops and supplies. He takes no oath, and gives no bond." * * *

"Such a system of public policy must lead inevitably to personal favoritism at the public expense, the corruption of the public morals, and a ruinous profligacy in the expenditure of the public treasure, organizing an army of sappers and miners whose covert assaults on the nation would scarcely be less effective than the open assaults of its traitorous enemies."

Again, on this subject:

"Can the Secretary of War pretend that the national peril and the necessity for immediate action justified these irresponsible expenditures of the public money with no settlement for four months afterwards, even if there had been no responsible and experienced public officers in New York to perform the duties?"

On the subject of buying arms, as conducted by the late Secretary of War, the committee State a loss of over ninety thousand dollars to the Government in one transaction, and say:

"No Government that ever has existed can sustain itself with such improvidence in the management of its affairs."

In regard to the purchase of horses and wagons for the public service the committee sum up as follows:

"It appears from all the evidence which is detailed in the record of evidence accompanying this report, that the parties to these discreditable transactions had a perfect understanding with each other, and engaged in a system of corrupt pecuniary gains by means of requisitions and receipts signed in blank, and false invoices, at a time when the over-taxed finances of the Government and the confidence of a generous and patriotic people demanded the most rigid integrity."

Sir, in view of this dark record of atrocious guilt, it is no wonder that the chairman of that committee, [Mr. VAN WICK], in his speech of February 7, on this floor, should exclaim:

"The mania for stealing seems to have run through all the relations of Government. Almost from the general to the drummer boy, from those nearest the throne of power to the merest tide-waiter. Nearly every man who deals with the Government seems to feel or desire that it would not long survive, and each had a common right to plunder while it lived."

Again, the chairman says:

"While it is no justification, the example has been set in the very Departments of the Government. As a general thing none but favorites gain access there, and none other can obtain contracts which bear enormous profits." "The Department which has allowed conspiracies after bidding has been closed to defraud the Government of the lowest bid, and by allowing the guilty to reap the fruits of their crime, has itself become *particeps criminis*."

And well might the able and fearless member of the committee from Massachusetts, [Mr. DAWES,] in view of these revelations, also assert, as he did before the House and the country, that "startling facts have come to the notice of the committee, and to the notice of the whole country, touching the mode and manner of the expenditure of the public money;" that, "in the first year of a Republican Administration, which came into power upon professions of reform and retrenchment, there is indubitable evidence abroad in the land that somebody has plundered the public Treasury well nigh in that single year as much as the entire current yearly expenses of the Government during the Administration which the people hurled from power because of its corruption." And further that those heavy measures of taxation which have been brought forward by the Committee of Ways and Means would "fall like a dead pall upon the public, unless before them goes this assurance, that these vast and extreme measures instituted to resuscitate and revive and replenish the Treasury, are not merely for means to fill other and longer, as well as the already gorged pockets of public plunderers."

But, sir, passing on from the evidence of fraud and corruption in the management of our public affairs, as furnished by the proceedings of this House, I proceed to other fields. The result of the labors of this committee are before the

country, and I can do no more in my brief hour than to extract a few conclusive sentences. But investigation of this kind has not been confined alone to this body. The other branch of Congress has had the subject of official delinquency also forced upon their attention. I hold in my hand a report of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, relating to one single transaction in which the Government suffered a loss of \$70,000. I read from its concluding portions:

"It is said to be necessary, not only that justice should be done, but that the public should be satisfied that it is done; and in this view your committee regret that in the city of New York, a man could not be found to transact this business for the Navy Department, out of the family connection of the Secretary, for however pure and honest his purpose may have been in the selection it cannot fail to give rise to suspicions that other motives than a single purpose to subserve the public interests may possibly have influenced the choice that was made. The time, too, at which this arrangement was made by which such a vast and disproportionate amount of the public money was paid for so inconsiderable a service, was peculiarly unfortunate. The country was engaged in a war in which its very existence was at stake. The nation had been aroused, and was contributing men and money without stint to defend the national lite, vindicate the national honor, and restore the rightful supremacy of the Constitution and the laws. The energies and the industry of the country were to be taxed as they never had been before, and the pressing necessities of the Government had compelled it to resort to new and untried sources of revenue. The hut of poverty and the splendid mansions of wealth were alike called upon to aid in bearing the burden which rebellion and civil war had thrown upon the nation. All this was borne, and would have been borne cheerfully, if the tax-payers had seen or been convinced that their money was to be faithfully and economically applied to the purposes for which it was raised. But when they see immense sums lavished upon personal or political favorites for small and inconsiderable services, confidence in the Government is impaired, public credit is paralyzed, and the very existence of the nation is imperiled."

And in commenting on this alarming state of corruption in the Navy Department, a very distinguished Senator (Mr. HALE) used the following strong language:

"When the country was taxing itself as it never had before, when it was bleeding at every pore, when new and untried sources of revenue were resorted to, when you were taxing the necessities of the humblest inhabitant of your land, and when the land was straining itself and all its citizens, and they were sending their young men to the field and giving their money to the Treasury—at that time and in that hour when it seemed as if the very existence of the nation stood in the scale, doubtful which way it was to turn, George D. Morgan, a merchant of New York, a brother-in-law of the Secretary of the Navy, was receiving from the hard earnings of this hard taxed people a compensation equal to about twelve thousand dollars a month."

He further says:

"I regret to see what has been stated in several of the papers, not that they believed this was an honest transaction, not that it was a fair one, not that it was one that deserved to receive the approbation and the sanction of the Government; but the excuse is, that it is not half so bad as what has been done in other cases; and I have no doubt that that is true. I have no doubt that if some of the investigating committees go on they will find that there have been transactions compared with which \$70,000 was a small sum, and that it will be considered ungracious to call up one of these petty offenders that has only taken \$70,000 and dealt with him when there are others going off staggering under the load of hundreds of thousands."

"You are about to call upon this people for large taxes; you are about to call on them for a large loan, and a large tax to pay the interest on that loan, to maintain the public faith and to enable your armies to prosecute this war successfully. I ask you, Senators, with what face you can go home to your constituents when they see this thing which they all know and understand; when they see that \$70,000 have been paid for the services of one man for less than six months at a time of such distress as this, and appeal to your own people and ask them to come forward and put their hands into their pockets and shoulders to the wheel and forward this ear? Sir, I do not know what other men may do; I cannot; I dare not. I should expect the finger of scorn from the hut of poverty to point me out as reckless and faithless for being here a member of the Senate, in this hour of our country's peril, if I had failed to rebuke profligacy in the expenditure of the public money, let it be when and where it may."

Again, this Senator exclaims, from his extensive knowledge of the management of our affairs:

"I do not know but I may over estimate, entirely over estimate, the character of this transaction; but I tell you, sir, I believe, and I declare it upon my responsibility as a Senator of the United States, that the liberties of this country are in greater danger to-day from the corruptions and from the profligacy practiced in the various Departments of this Government than it is from the open enemy in the field."

Sir, I might here pause and dwell upon this terrible accusation, coming from a quarter so high and so fully entitled to credit. A hostile army has been for a year in sight of this Capitol. Treason has usurped by far the largest portion of the territory of the United States; our rivers have been turned to blood;

our mountains have become Golgothas; our valleys are the burial places of our first-born, slain in battle; the wail of mothers, wives, and daughters goes up from one ocean to the other, as the voice of Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are not; the very sun above our heads seems veiled in mourning over the funeral sorrows of this once happy people; and yet, in the midst of these thickening signs of national calamity, it is announced by a Senator who helped to place this Administration in power, and emphasized by an appeal to his senatorial honor, that a more deadly evil than them all combined is now assaulting the existence of the Government—"that the liberties of this country are in greater danger to day from the corruptions and from the profligacy practiced in the various departments of this Government than it is from the open enemy in the field." Sir, I call upon the people, of all ranks and conditions in life, of every party, of every creed, and of every faith, to give ear to this warning, and to defend themselves at the great tribunal of the ballot-box against wrongs so wicked, oppression so inhuman, crimes so revolting. I abhor treason; my soul has never sympathized with the designs of a traitor to the Constitution of my country; I would stand here and consume all my time in denunciation of the fatal doctrine of secession and all its deplorable consequences, if any result would thus be accomplished; but when I find proven offences in our own midst of sufficient enormity to prostrate any nation that ever had a place on the pages of history, if not speedily checked, I see not why I should pass them by, in order to discuss a subject on which there is no diversity of opinion.

I have not, however, completed my proof of the charge which I make of general and wide-spread fraud in the management of the financial concerns of the Government. There is one dark chapter more to which I wish to call the attention of the House and the country. I allude to the melancholy history of the military department of the West, as written by the committee on war claims, at the city of St. Louis. Would to God that this Republic could have been spared this additional and most bitter cup of shame! The report of this committee is so extraordinary, so utterly amazing in its monstrous revelations of lawlessness and fierce, devouring cupidity, that the mind almost refuses a belief in its statements. I venture to assert that it is without a parallel in the recorded transactions of any nation on the face of the civilized earth. But painful and humiliating as the facts therein contained are to every man who loves the purity of our national name, yet the character of the gentlemen who compose that committee, eminent alike for their ability, their patriotism, and their integrity, together with the clear and unquestioned evidence on which they base their report, rivet the belief in every candid mind that the simple truth has been conscientiously told. There is no escape from this damning exposure. Its light is as scorching, withering as the hot blasts of the simoon of the desert. It will not do for gentlemen on the opposite side of the Chamber to attempt by studied silence to ignore its existence. It is not a document to be treated in that way. It emanates from a source of the highest responsibility. It is the work of honest, faithful labor. No malice from personal griefs or political rivalry can be charged against it. Let us see, then, how so fair, so able a report deals with the idol to which a great party has linked its sinking fortunes. I can quote but enough to show the general license and corruption which prevailed. My time forbids more than this.

In July, 1861, General Fremont, surrounded by his personal and political favorites, gathering from the Atlantic seaboard and the coast of the Pacific, like vultures to their prey, assumed the command of the western department, with the rank of major general, and established his headquarters at the city of St. Louis. He at once proceeded to inaugurate a system in the purchase of military supplies, of which the committee speak as follows:

"This system, alike fatal to the pecuniary interests of the Government and the morality of the service, was not confined to tents, but extended to every portion of the field of army supplies which was sufficiently fruitful to attract the avarie of this class of men. Honest mechanics who had tents for sale, merchants who had supplies which the Government needed, and men from the country offering horses and mules were turned from the quartermaster's office without a conference, and driven down into the meshes of the 'middle men,' to become, in common with the Government, a prey to their rapacity."

Starting with such a system, each day's practice under it was a new page of

corruption. Whether in fortifying St. Louis, at a dead loss to the Government of \$250,000, or in the infinite folly of building a worthless pontoon bridge at Paducah, at another loss of \$125,000; whether in ordering the construction of railroad cars, at a loss of \$75,000, or in the purchase of forage, by which \$100,000 was plundered from the people; whether in the purchase of arms, of clothing, the building of boats, the purchase of horses, mules, and their equipments, the rent of houses, of barracks, of steamboats, the use of railroads and the telegraph lines, in all, in everything, everywhere, all pervading and omnipresent fraud of the boldest and most audacious character is discovered and dragged to light by the labors of this committee. It is not, sir, poor, pitiful, sneaking fraud, but fraud of gigantic dimensions, and of a daring satanic aspect. It is fraud such as a corrupt and aspiring consul of Rome might commit in some distant and opulent province, when he cast his ambitious and longing gaze upon the imperial purple. It is fraud such as has marked the career in all ages of those who entertained the usurper's designs against the liberties of their country. That I do not state this case too strongly, let the following extracts from the report before me bear witness:

"The most stupendous contracts, involving an almost unprecedented waste of the public money, were given out by him [General Fremont] in person to favorites, over the heads of the honest and competent officers appointed by law. It seemed to be his purpose to present himself as the embodiment of political and military power, and to show alike by his words and his conduct how little he depended upon the Government of his country, and how utterly he disregarded its laws, its regulations, and its policy. Of course such an example could not be otherwise than contagious. The whole frame-work of the political and military systems, as organized by law, was unbraided, and disorder and criminal insubordination everywhere prevailed. There could be no obedience when the general of the department openly taught and practiced resistance to the laws as a right, if not a duty. There could be no economy where the general exposed himself continually to imputations of laboring in his great office to feed the greed of his followers for gain. He occupied, with his family and several members of his staff, a marble palace, and lived, amid its luxurious furniture and glittering wares, at a stipulated expense of \$6,000 per annum to the Government, at a time when the homes of millions of our people were darkened by the horrors of civil war. Could it be expected that his subordinates would display any special sympathy with our national sufferings, or any marked solicitude to guard the public Treasury from plunder? Instead of going to Cairo, as he could have done for a few dollars on one of the vessels transporting the troops which accompanied him, he chartered a magnificent steamer, at a cost of \$1,600 to the Government, to convey himself and cortege alone. This steamer was anchored out in the stream instead of lying at the wharf as all others did and do, and when the general drove in his carriage and four to the water's edge, yet another steamer, at still further cost to the Government, as we learn from a claim presented for it, was employed to put himself and suite on board. A foreign prince or potentate, in a season of national mourning, might thus live and thus enter his pleasure yacht or his barge of state, but insensibility amid the calamities of civil war, and wastefulness, when the public debt is being increased at the rate of from one to two millions daily, when exhibited by a general of the American Army, is a spectacle from which the patriot may well turn away in grief and humiliation."

Sir, there was but one thing more needed to complete this wretched picture of public debauchery and crime, and that, unhappily, was furnished. The following extract from the report of the committee shows that Major General John C. Fremont conspired to overthrow the Constitution of his country, and trample under foot the liberties of his Government:

"The statements of these witnesses—officers of unimpeachable integrity and intelligence—will, we are sure, be heard by the Government with equal astonishment and sorrow. General Fremont proclaims, on assuming his command, that 'there were no longer any civil rights; that there was no Government except that outside of the Constitution, which had been suspended; that it was his determination to administer his department without reference to law or regulations; that the people of the United States were in the field, and that he was at their head, and that he meant to carry out such measures as they, the people, expected him to carry out, "without regard to the red tape" of the Washington people'—that is, the President and Congress. It is singular how perfectly these sentiments harmonize with those held by the usurpers who in this and other ages of the world have sought and established absolute power upon the ruins of public liberty. Some of these usurpers, taking yet higher ground than that assumed in the interview with Colonel Andrews, have claimed for themselves a mission to 'carry out' the will of God, but none of them have sunk their pretensions below a special mission to 'carry out' the will of the people. Cæsar, when he stood upon the banks of the Rubicon and waved to his veterans to advance, did not make a bolder declaration against his country than this. The words, so earnestly and so often spoken, announced a revolution conceived, but which, happily, most happily for the country, the parent had not the strength to bring forth. No man has lived in the tide of times wise and pure enough to be intrusted with such a power as is here claimed. Military chieftains who cut 'red tape' always do it with their swords, and history proves that the throat of their country suffers quite as much as the 'tape' in the operation. As free institutions have their foundations in law, and in the obedience of the people and their representatives, civil and military, to it, this expression of

a purpose to cast aside all political and constitutional restraints, made in the halls of legislation even, would alarm, but when made in the field by a chieftain, at the head of a great army, it chills and awes the patriot's heart by its parricidal spirit. It reveals an unscrupulous ambition, which awaits but the prestige and power of victory to sweep the Government itself, as a cobweb, from its path.

"This sad page in the history of the late commander of this department, gathers a deep shadow from the circumstances under which these declarations were made. General Fremont had a few weeks before took and subscribed the following military oath: 'I, John C. Fremont, do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against their enemies or opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers over me, according to the rules and articles of war.' He thus in sight of God and his country, had plighted faith with his Government that he would bear to it 'true allegiance,' and he stood pledged by the most solemn of human sanctions to support the Constitution which, when 'the people are in the field,' places at 'their head' the President of the United States, and not any general holding a commission under him. With confiding fondness he had been summoned from the obscurity of private life, and, preferred above the veterans and a whole army of patriots, he was made a major general. Scarcely has he girded on his sword, to whose honor the best interests of the nation had been committed, when he says to his subordinates and followers that he draws it, not in the name of law or of the Government, but in defiance of both, to enforce such measures as, in his judgment, 'the people expected him to carry out.' These words were spoken, as it were, in the very sick chamber of the Republic, and had the tone of the undertaker while the patient was yet struggling for life. They were uttered against the Government of a country, not then tranquil and strong and able to battle with all assailants, but of a country distracted and humbled, and bleeding under the stabs of traitors. They came from no flush of excitement springing from a triumph of arms, but were the solemn and oft-repeated enunciations of a general just entering the field of his future operations, and surveying for the first time the strength of his gathering army. They were addressed to officers of high rank in the service, and were intended to impress them with obedience to his revolutionary programme. General Fremont already held the sword, and it was most important for his purposes that Colonel Andrews, the head of the pay department here, and Major Johnson, a paymaster under him, should not interfere with his free use of the national purse."

Sir, in what age do we live? Is this the age of republican simplicity and integrity, or are we transported to the days of fraudulent usurpers, to the unhallowed scenes of the Roman Caesars? Are we in republican America, or have we, by some magic process, been suddenly dropped down in the midst of oriental luxury and kingly indulgence? Has the Administration of this Government sought for a model among the principles of Washington and Jefferson, or from the examples of Tiberius, Caligula, and Domitian? The great philosophic poet says that—

"Corruption wins not more than honesty."

But is that true in these latter days? I have shown that, by the deliberate finding of a committee raised under the authority of this House, and by the action of this House itself, the late Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, is declared guilty, in this awful crisis, of plundering, and with criminal knowledge permitting to be plundered, the resources of the people, the Treasury of his country. With that brand upon him, he steps from one exalted station to another, and goes as our accredited minister to the court of the greatest and most friendly Power to us on the continent of Europe. The conclusions which the Russian Emperor may draw in regard to the American sense of public morality will not, perhaps, advance us much in his estimation. Let Mr. Cameron present the following resolution, adopted so recently by this House, as a part of his credentials, and our degradation in that quarter of the world will be complete:

Resolved, That Simon Cameron, late Secretary of War, by investing Alexander Cummings with the control of large sums of the public money, and authority to purchase military supplies without restriction, without requiring from him any guarantee for the faithful performance of his duties, when the services of competent public officers were available, and by involving the Government in a vast number of contracts with persons not legitimately engaged in the business pertaining to the subject-matter of such contracts, especially in the purchase of arms for future delivery, has adopted a policy highly injurious to the public service, and deserves the censure of this House.

I have shown that, by the deliberate finding of a regular committee of the Senate, the present Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, in connection with his brother-in-law, George D. Morgan, has unlawfully extorted from the taxpayers of the Government \$70,000 of their money. With neither justification nor restitution on his part, he yet retains his seat at the board of the Cabinet

council, wears fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day, while the wives and children of soldiers have died in the great philanthropic cities of the North for the want of bread.

I have shown that a commission of most eminent gentlemen appointed by the President himself have proven, conclusively proven, that the blighting touch, of John C. Fremont during his hundred days in Missouri palsied public credit, defrauded the people of millions, filled the bloated purses of his favorites by fraud, demoralized the public service in every branch, and sought to destroy the Constitution itself. The exhausted soldier is put to death for yielding to irresistible slumber at his post, the victim of pinching poverty is sent to the penitentiary for stealing provision for his wife and children; but this exalted criminal finds approval for his conduct, is surrounded by flatterers, is restored to the field, and sits in the saddle of command and of power. Sir, Cicero, brought the haughty Verres to trial and to condemnation for his fraudulent practices in the Sicilian province; and Burke enriched the English language by his denunciations of the extortionate measures imposed by Warren Hastings on the people of the East Indies; but in the midst of fraud and robbery in the very highest departments of this Government we have as yet seen no official delinquent brought to answer the law for the plunder of the public Treasury, but rather we have seen the perpetrators of these wrongs receiving still greater marks of confidence and of favor, and mounting to still loftier heights of honor.

But, Mr. Speaker, having established by the highest proof, the charge which I make of fraud in the management of our pecuniary affairs by which our public debt has been so fearfully increased, I shall now proceed to the brief consideration of a few other points properly in this connection, and which I conceive to be of public interest.

We seek to take refuge, sir, from the enormous figures of our national indebtedness whenever they are brought to our attention, in the fact that we can defer its payment, and bequeath it as an inheritance to coming generations. Admitting that this unworthy thing may to some extent be done, yet let us see, for a few moments, what amount of money this Government will be compelled annually to raise in order to prevent open and confessed bankruptcy before the world. I will content myself with a specific statement of the various items of current yearly expense which must be regularly met. Against the substantial correctness of this statement I challenge successful contradiction.

The interest on the public debt, at a very low estimate, \$100,000,000.

The ordinary expenses of the Government, including appropriations for the increased magnitude of the Army and Navy after the war is over, will reach \$150,000,000 at another low estimate. I am especially warranted in fixing this amount in view of the declaration on this floor, by the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, [Mr. BLAIR, of Missouri,] that hereafter our peace establishment will consist of a standing army of a hundred thousand men.

The pension list comes next. This Government must not fail to meet the requirements of civilization and of humanity. It must and will provide for the support of its maimed and wounded, and for the maintenance of the widows and orphans of those who have fallen on the field of battle, or been stricken down by disease while in the public service. It is of course difficult to calculate the amount which will be required to meet this item of expense; but no well-informed person will pretend that it will be less than the sum of \$100,000,000.

To the above must be added at least \$50,000,000 more as a margin for claims against the Government, contingent expenses, and unforeseen events during this convulsive and unsettled period of the world's history.

We have thus an inevitable annual expenditure, without making any provision whatever for the payment of the public debt itself, of the sum of \$400,000,000. This amount will make its demands on the resources of the people in each succeeding year, as regularly as the season come and go, and in a voice as imperative and inexorable as the cry of fate. You need not avert your frightened gaze from the sore contemplation of this terrible fact. It is the lion in the pathway of the future, but it must be met. Death itself is not more certain to all than is this monstrous annual burden on the shoulders of the

American people. And now, sir, bearing this fearful fact in mind, from which there is now no escape, the question necessarily arises with immense, overwhelming force, as to what system of finance shall be adopted to raise annually this monstrous sum of money. It is the vital question of the day, and paramount to all others save civil liberty and republican government.

I live, Mr. Speaker, in a land of corn, in a land where the fruits of the earth constitute the reward of labor. I live in a great valley, beside whose agricultural wealth the famed valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile and the richest fields of Europe sink into utter insignificance, and whose more than Egyptian granaries invite the markets of the civilized world. The plow, the harrow, the reaper, and the threshing machine are our implements of industry, and compose the coat of arms of our nobility. The soil is our fruitful mother, and we are her children. We fill our cribs with grain, and stock our pastures with cattle, and with these we seek to purchase those other necessary articles of life which are not made in our midst. These are our possessions, which we offer in barter and exchange with the trading merchants of the world who give us the best returns. This we conceive to be our right, and that the Government in which we live should protect us in its enjoyment.

But turn to the contemplation of another region of this country. You there behold the land of manufacturing machinery, and hear the sound of the loom and the spindle. The people of the North and East make fabrics of cloth, and manufacture all those articles which man needs and which do not grow. These constitute their wealth and their stock of merchandise for trade. The markets of the world are open to them, and of right ought to be. The West is an immense consumer of those articles which they have to sell. We are willing to buy of them of our own choice if we can buy there as cheap as we can elsewhere. But I here aver that the unequal and unjust system of finance now adopted by the party in power gives to the vast manufacturing interest of this country the arbitrary power to fix its own exorbitant prices, and the laboring agriculturist is compelled to pay them. To this no people can submit. Against this outrage the people of the West will cry out. You have fastened upon this country the most odious system of tariff on imported goods that ever paralyzed the energies of a nation or oppressed its agricultural citizens. You say by that tariff that the manufacturing institutions of this country shall not be brought in competition with those of other parts of the world. You say that our ports shall be closed to foreign traders for fear they will undersell the manufacturer of New England or the ironmonger of Pennsylvania. You require of the European merchant a duty which he cannot pay, and thus you banish him from our commercial intercourse. You say to the western farmer, to agriculturists everywhere, that there shall be but one market in which they may buy. You drive them to the counters and foundries of men whom you protect in a monopoly of the sales which they make. You do all this for the sole and avowed reason that goods from abroad can be sold here cheaper than they can be made and sold by our own citizens, and that a protection must be given to high prices. Every school boy in political science knows who pays this increase of price. Need I, at this period of American history, discuss the operations of a high protective tariff? Need I stop to show its folly and its injustice? No, sir. It is one of the settled questions of governmental policy. Twenty years ago it was fairly tried, and the American people passed an intelligent verdict of condemnation against it. It was fully heard by greater advocates than it has to-day, and repudiated as an unfair and ruinous system. If any question was ever, in the history of this Government, distinctly tried before a tribunal of the people and condemned, it was the question of a protective tariff. The country prospered by its repudiation, and the laborer bought where his money would buy most. But this issue has again risen, and in a shape more offensive and injurious to the true interests of the country than ever before. The present tariff is one which no party in the past would have sanctioned. It would have alarmed the old Whig party as much as any other by its stringent and prohibitory features. It goes far beyond what was deemed wise or prudent by the strongest protectionists of former high tariff periods. And now allow me to state some of its specific practical operations as a part of the financial policy of the present hour.

It forces the laboring man, the consumer, the farming classes generally, to pay for manufactured articles, which embrace a large portion of the necessities of life, an increased price over their proper value, and over that for which they can elsewhere be bought, of from forty to one hundred per cent. Thus a tax of most fearful rate is levied on one branch of industry, not to support the Government, but to contribute as a gratuitous donation to a privileged and favored business. That is the first extortionate species of taxation which meets us in the examination of this subject. It is one which at any time would fall with oppressive cruelty on a large majority of the loyal people of the country; but, at a time like this, when the government itself is claiming almost the entire substance of the land for its maintenance, no language can be found sufficiently strong with which to characterize the enormity of such a policy.

In the next place, the present tariff robs the Government of a much-needed revenue by keeping imported goods from our shores. Under its operations during the past year, according to a statement made a few weeks since in the British Parliament by the Chancellor of the English Exchequer, our importations from Great Britain alone have fallen off to the amount of \$85,000,000. The report on the finances of our own Government for the year ending June 30, 1861, shows a loss in our receipts arising from customs during the first three months after this tariff went into operation of over ten millions of dollars as compared with the receipts during a similar period a year previous. Under the tariff of 1846, a revenue to support the Government was sought by liberal terms of trade with foreign nations, and richly obtained. The rule is now reversed, and for the unworthy purpose of protecting a class of business which ought to sustain itself or be abandoned, this great fountain of pecuniary support to the nation is dried up. It no longer flows into the Treasury, and the money which is thus diverted from the public to private and individual benefit has to be replaced under this Administration by direct and specific taxes on the people. Thus taxation grows and augments its alarming proportions in order that the interests of a favored few may be cherished and promoted.

But the manner in which this taxation is to be levied, and in which it is to affect the different interests of the country exceeds all the preceding features of criminal outrage on those who live by producing from the soil. By the provisions of the tax bill which recently passed this House a tax of three per cent. *ad valorem* is laid upon all articles of manufacture in the hands of the manufacturer. It is estimated that there will thus be raised \$50,000,000 of the annual income arising from taxation. This the manufacturing interest is to pay for the support of the Government, and the airs of patriotism which are assumed in consequence are eminently characteristic. But inasmuch as this manufacturing interest is guarded by a Morrill tariff from all competition in selling, and strictly protected in increasing its prices of sale to its forced customers to an almost unlimited extent, will any one, in his simplicity, pretend that the three per cent. wherewith it is taxed, the \$50,000,000 which it has to pay, will not be charged up to the buyer when its goods are sold. The tariff and taxation are kindred measures, born of a common origin, and, like leashed hounds, hunt for their innocent prey coupled together. The tariff stands guard over the interests of the manufacturer, while taxation hunts for every other substance in the land on which to fasten its fangs. And if, for the sake of appearances, the manufacturing interest is mentioned in a tax bill, the tariff steps forward and enables its cherished friends to recover back every dollar which they are assessed by raising the price of the woolen clothes, the linens, the muslins, the calicoes, the plowshares, and the implements of husbandry, and the articles of daily necessity which the American Government forces its citizens to buy of its protected monopolists. This is the culmination, the climax of wrong. A Government which plunders one citizen to enrich another needs the strong, stern hand of reform on its helm.

Though perfect equality should prevail in meeting the immense taxation which is coming like a mountain avalanche upon this people, yet it will be born amid sorrow and weary pain; but when it shall all fall virtually on a given class of citizens it will become an intolerable, suffocating nightmare of ruin and of death. I challenge the attention of the country that such is the

working of the present system, which it is pretended has been adopted for the support of the Government. Already we see its effects. The great manufacturing corporations of the East are crowding their bloated pockets with rapid and gigantic gains. Their dividends of profits are swollen some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. This is no random statement, but is sustained by the statistics before me. It is a fact, too, of which the whole country has taken cognizance.

Sir, no sectional boundaries to my love of country prompts these remarks. I call God to witness with what devotion I love every sod and rock, and river, mountain, prairie, and forest of my native land. For its happiness and glory it would be sweet and honorable to die. I reckon no section of it above another. It is all alike to me, all dear and hallowed by the principles of constitutional liberty. But I speak in the name of justice, which is everywhere present, in the name of fraternal and American equality, and I ask you, I implore you, to look at the condition of the western people. Their interests have been abandoned on this floor by more than half their Representatives, and they stand to-day bearing the hard brunt of the pitiless storm which has burst from the angry sky. They are shut out from all fair markets for their produce. Their natural channels of trade to the South are closed by the impious hand of war, and their avenues to the markets of the North are obstructed by the avarice of railroads. It costs sixty cents to freight a bushel of corn from the Wabash river to New York, and leaves from seven to fourteen cents to the farmer who has caused it to grow and gathered it in, as the reward of his toil. For everything else he receives the same beggarly return. And yet who has lifted up his voice here in behalf of that great, that honest and oppressed people? Where is their representative in the Committee of Ways and Means, that great despotic committee which matures measures of tariff, of taxation, and of finance, and whose decrees on this floor are as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians? On that committee, which speaks the voice of fate for the weal or woe of the tax-payers of all the land, the great imperial domain of the West, from the feet of the Alleghany Mountains to the Pacific ocean, has had no member during this important session. Blow after blow has fallen on her naked head, and now she stands exposed to the payment of four-fifths of all the burdens which this Government has to bear. I speak advisedly. She has been trampled under foot. Her rights have been disregarded. She has been plundered for the benefit of others. And from here I call upon her to vindicate herself, to assert her equality, to resist oppression, to scorn the tribute which she is called upon to pay to a branch of industry which God and nature never intended she should support, to demand from her Government the same protection which others obtain, and to reckon with her oppressors at the ballot-box. As for me, I shall join in no such system of injustice, inequality, and wanton extortion against the people whose interests are confided to my care in this House. I shall resist it in all constitutional methods, and denounce it everywhere; and in doing so I shall perform what I conceive to be one of the highest duties of honest, fearless patriotism.

I might here stop, Mr. Speaker, and rest this great subject with the American people. The vast debt, the unparalleled fraud by which it has been accumulated, and the iniquitous mode of assessing taxes on the wealth and labor of the country, are all before them. But the political party now in the ascendancy in the executive and legislative departments of this Government have never considered any measure of policy on any subject complete or perfect unless it embraced a connection, however unnatural, with the African race, unfortunately in large numbers on this continent. These are strange days that have come upon us. We have all lived to see the abolition of slavery become a pecuniary question, and the abolition party become a direct tax upon the pockets of the people. The Federal tax gatherer will visit every house in the land in the next six months for money to carry out its schemes. In the midst of a war more expensive than the world ever witnessed before; with an army and navy costing us more than the armies of England, France, Austria, and Russia combined; with the hand of plunder deep in the sacred vaults of the national Treasury; with the hungry spirit of taxation, like the gaunt and insatiate specter of famine, hunting for the smallest substances of a laborious people, out of which to

wring an income; with markets closed, prices depressed, bankruptcy casting its appalling shadow on the horizon of the future, and dismay gathering in the faces of the yeomen of the nation, this, sir, is the time chosen to startle us with a deliberate and most earnest proposal to purchase with money and set free the slave population of the South. The President of the United States and both branches of the American Congress have solemnly pledged this Government, in the face of its own citizens, and before the attentive gaze of the nations of the earth, to buy and liberate, if their owners will sell, the entire four millions of slaves which are held in the southern States of this Union. This is the pledge, and it stands recorded by a vote of this House, by a vote of the Senate, and by the approval of the President, who amazed the country in its zealous recommendation. It is now a part of the financial policy of the present Administration, made so by a full party expression. Nor has it been barren of fruits even thus early. The slaves of the District of Columbia have already been bought by a forced and unconstitutional sale, and over one million of dollars appropriated from the earnings of the people to pay for them. This act of fanaticism fixes the meaning which the authors of this pledge attach to the phrase "pecuniary aid." It has received a severely practical illustration, and the doubting mind is set at rest. But if anything further was needed to convince the tax payer of the designs of abolitionism, I have it before me. I hold in my hand a pamphlet of twelve pages, written by Daniel R. Goodloe, an officeholder under this Administration, evidently a man of ability, but unfortunately led astray by a spurious philosophy and a mistaken philanthropy on the subject of slavery. He warmly and ably espouses the policy of the President, and makes the following statement of the cost of that policy to the American people:

"I have shown what the compensation to the border States would be at two different rates of payment *per capita* for the slaves, and it will have been seen that I have favored the more liberal scale. I now proceed to show what would be the cost of redeeming the whole slave population of the Union at the same rates.

"By the census of last year there were 3,952,801 slaves in the United States and Territories. I have already shown that 454,441, which belonged to the border States, would be worth, at \$250 each, \$113,610,250, and at \$300 each, \$136,382,300. There remains to be disposed of, therefore, 3,498,360 slaves embraced in the country subject to the rebels, but including, of course, large numbers belonging to friends of the Union, who have been constrained into obedience to the rebel authorities against their wills. At the lowest estimated average value of \$250 these slaves of the rebels would be worth \$874,590,000, and adding the compensation to the border States, on the same terms, the aggregate cost to the Government would be \$988,200,250. At the higher rate of \$300, the slaves in the rebel States would be worth \$1,049,505,000; and adding the cost of compensation to the border States, at the same rate, the aggregate expense of emancipation would be \$1,185,40,300. Or for the convenience of round numbers, the cost of emancipation would be, at \$250 per head, \$1,000,000,000, and at \$300 per head, the cost would be \$1,200,000,000."

These are the figures made by an ardent friend of the system, who is now employed, by appointment of the President, in assessing the value of the slaves of this District. Sir, I turn from them with horror. I cannot linger over them. I hand them over to the white sons of toil throughout the land, and call upon them to consider well the lesson which they teach. The Pharisees of eighteen hundred years ago provoked the maledictions of the Saviour by their intemperate and hypocritical zeal in the affairs of other people; and a portion of the citizens of the North, in the contemplation of the above figures, may find a curse upon an exactly similar offense, which will prevent its commission in the future. Abolitionism has hovered in our heavens like an angel of death, and from its wings has shaken pestilence and war; and now, like a grizzly terror, it comes to every household for every tenth of the fruits of the earth and the flocks of the field. Like the fierce locusts of Egypt, it comes to devour our green fields and blast our golden harvests. It comes announced by the President and sanctioned by both Houses of Congress, and it remains to be seen whether the sinews of strained and oppressed industry will submit to its ravenous and illegal demands.

I now take leave of this subject. I have dwelt upon it to-day, not to discourage or depress the energies of the people, but to awaken my countrymen to a sense of their perilous situation, in order that they may gird up their loins and meet it in a manner becoming the intelligent, free citizens of Amer-

R. H. W.

ica. The present, it is true, is dark, and filled with the elements of the tempest; but in the sky of the future the star of hope is still burning with all its ancient lustre. I believe in its promises of returning prosperity, honor, and unity to this Government. Ay, sir, Hope, Hope, the sweet comforter of the weary hours of anguish, the merciful and benignant angel, walking forever by the side of mourning sorrow, the soothing, ministering spirit of every human woe, the stay and support of great nations in their trials, as well as of feeble men; hope, that never dies nor sleeps, but shares its immortality with the soul itself, will bear us through the Red Sea and the wilderness that are before us. I indulge, Mr. Speaker, in this hope, and cherish it as my friend—a friend that always smiles and points upward and onward to bright visions beyond the baleful clouds which now envelop us as a shroud. But the basis of this hope with me is the future action of the people themselves. In the wise, patriotic, and Christian conduct of the American people, I behold this nation lifted up again from its prostration, purified of its bloody pollution, robed in the shining garments of peace; the furious demon of civil war, which has rended us and caused us to sit howling amidst the tombs of the dead, cast out by the spirit of the omnipotent and merciful Master, who walked upon the waters and bade the winds be still. I expect to see the people raise up the Constitution of our dear and blessed fathers from the deep degradation of its enemies as Moses reared aloft the brazen serpent amidst the stricken children of Israel for the healing of a nation. I expect to see them, wielding the sword in one hand and appealing to the ballot-box with the other, crush and hurl from power corrupt and seditious agitators against the peace and stability of this Union, armed and unarmed, in the North as well as in the South. I expect to see a Congress succeed this, coming fresh from the loyal and honest masses, reflecting their pure and unsullied love for the institutions handed down to us from the days of revolutionary glory. To this end let all good men everywhere bend their energies. Then will come again the glory and the happiness of our past—those days of purity, of peace, and of brotherly love, over which all America now mourns as the Jewish captive who wept by the waters of Babylon, and refused to sing because Judea was desolate. This Union will be restored, armed rebellion and treason will give way to peaceful allegiance, but not until the ancient moderation and wisdom of the founders of the Republic control once more in this Capitol. Unnatural, inhuman hate, the accursed spirit of unholy vengeance, the wild and cruel purposes of unreasoning fanaticism, the debasing lust of avarice and plunder, the unfair and dishonest schemes of sectional aggrandizement, must all give way to the higher and better attributes and instincts of the human heart. In their place must reign the charitable precepts of the Bible and the conservative doctrines of the Constitution; and on these combined it is my solemn conviction that the Union of these States will once more be founded as upon a rock which man cannot overthrow, and which God in His mercy will not.

TOWERS, PRINTERS.

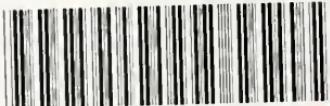


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 012 028 300 5

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 012 028 300 5